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Commission on the Status of Women
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Agenda item 3 (c)
Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women: implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern

Kenya*, Panama*, Philippines*, Thailand and Zambia*: draft resolution

Women and mental health, with emphasis on special groups

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Reaffirming the commitments made in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women[1] that women have the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health,

Recalling that the Platform for Action, in the critical area on women and health,[2] included women's mental health on the agenda for women's empowerment, by asserting that health was a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being; women had the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health; health and well-being eluded the majority of women; and one of the major barriers for women to the achievement of the highest attainable standard of health was gender-based inequality,

Upholding the importance of attaining full mental health for all people, as recognized in General Assembly resolution 46/119 of 17 December 1991, entitled "The protection of persons with mental illness and the improvement of mental health care",

Welcoming the strong commitments to women and mental health made by the Director General of the World Health Organization at the forty-third session of the Commission on the Status of Women,

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* In accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the functional commissions of the Economic and Social Council

[1] *Report of the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing, 4-15 September 1995* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.96.IV.13), chap. I, resolution 1, annexes I and II

[2] Ibid., annex II, para. 89

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Concerned that depression affects women twice as often as men, owing, among other factors, to the imposed inferior social and economic status of women and girls throughout the world,

Concerned also that women throughout their life cycle experience tremendous health burdens created by gender discrimination; all forms of violence, including domestic and sexual violence; lack of appropriate physical and mental health care, nutrition and education or access to them; high rates of illiteracy; and the stress of multiple and conflicting roles,

Acknowledging that special attention must be given to the mental health needs of women, including those who are marginalized because of, *inter alia*, race, ethnicity, religion, age, social and economic status, physical and/or mental disability, exploitative commercial sex, displacement, migration and HIV/AIDS,

1. *Calls* for the urgent implementation of the health objectives of the Beijing Platform for Action and other relevant international agreements with the integration of mental health as a priority issue;

2. *Requests* Governments to include in their national policies and plans of action for women specific measures that would address the mental health needs of women and girls, especially the need for psychosocial care and counselling services;

3. *Calls upon* Governments to take all possible steps to eliminate discrimination against women and girls in mental health care and to provide access to appropriate treatment that is responsive to women's mental health needs at all ages;

4. *Urges* Governments to develop and implement public awareness campaigns on mental health and education and public health policies that are gender-sensitive and focus on women and girls who are most in need of psychological support;

5. *Requests* Governments to provide or enhance mental health education and both pre-service and in-service training to primary health care workers, social service professionals, teachers and other educators, and community workers;

6. *Calls upon* Governments to develop and implement legislation and comprehensive social and economic policies that address the mental health needs of women and girls;

7. *Encourages* non-governmental organizations, private funding institutions and individual donors to organize and support, with the consent of the Governments concerned, mercy missions (along the lines of Médecins sans frontières) to areas where psychological/psychiatric problems are prevalent among the population, in particular among poor urban and rural women, with a view to providing not only primary treatment but also training for family members and/or other persons who may take over the care of the afflicted persons;

8. *Requests* pharmaceutical companies to donate medicines for the treatment of mental disorders, or to make them more affordable to areas where psychological/psychiatric problems are prevalent;

9. *Requests* the relevant United Nations bodies, in collaboration with relevant agencies, to adopt measures and develop projects that address and support the mental health needs of women and girls;

10. *Calls upon* the United Nations to develop and disseminate a training manual designed to provide primary health care workers, social service professionals, and other community workers with the appropriate skills for assisting women and girls who are

experiencing problems and mental disorders as a result of trauma, all forms of discrimination, exploitation, abuse and oppression;

11. *Urges* the Secretary-General to find ways within the United Nations and in coordination with other relevant agencies to organize regional expert group meetings with a view to developing gender- and age-disaggregated and gender-sensitive psychosocial and mental health situation analyses and indicators as bases for determining progress in women's and girls' emotional well-being and mental health, for submission to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-seventh session;

12. *Invites* concerned non-governmental organizations, funding sources and the private sector to support and develop a programme that will bring a wide range of expertise and proven interventions to the training of local community workers, teachers and primary health care staff and provide appropriate interventions for stress-related disorders to girls and women in crisis;

13. *Decides* to include in the framework of the review process for the special session of the General Assembly to appraise and assess progress achieved in implementation of the Beijing Programme for Action the emerging issue of mental health of girls and women, so that further initiatives and action can be undertaken;

14. *Invites* States Members and United Nations agencies concerned to report on existing measures relevant to the present resolution, and/or taken to implement it, for consideration by the Commission at its forty-fourth session.